DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 327 342 PS 019 386

AUTHOR Wells, Sharon
TITLE Instructing Primary Teachers To Integrate the Curriculum through an In-Service Program.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 59p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Development; *Elementary School Teachers; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Integrated Curriculum; Postsecondary Education; Primary Education; *Teacher Improvement; *Thematic Approach

ABSTRACT

A practicum intervention designed to enable primary grade teachers to integrate the components of the curriculum by using a thematic approach was implemented and evaluated. Teacher inservice training in developing a theme unit was provided, along with a list of professional references on curriculum integration. Additionally, teachers (n=18) were provided with resources when they needed extra help in organizing the curriculum components. A booklet describing the steps in organizing and integrating the curriculum was developed and presented to teachers. Practicum evaluation data indicated that outcomes were positive. Participating teachers learned a strategy by which to develop a theme to integrate the curriculum. Related materials are appended, including the booklet. Citations number 26. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED327342

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

X Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Instructing Primary Teachers To Integrate The Curriculum Through An In-Service Program

by

Sharon Wells

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sharon Wells

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1990

PS 019386

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Joseph M. Marzo

Joseph Marzo

Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Endicott, New York

1-91

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Sharon A. Wells under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

January 18, 1991

Date of Final Approval of Report

June S. Delano

June Delano, Ph.D., Advisor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer thanks her entire family for their consideration and support. Many thanks to the teachers for their willingness to participate in an in-service training. Special thanks to the co-presenter for her time and talents. A final thanks to the typist for her expertise.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... iv

LIST OF FIGURES..... v

ABSTRACT.....vi

Chapter

I INTRODUCTION..... 1

Description of Work Setting and Community..... 1
Writer's Work Setting and Role..... 3

II STUDY OF THE PROBLEM..... 4

Problem Description..... 4
Problem Documentation..... 5
Causative Analysis..... 7
Relationship of the Problem to the Literature. 8

III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS..... 12

Goals and Expectations..... 12
Performance Objectives..... 13
Measurement of Objectives..... 13

IV SOLUTION STRATEGY..... 15

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions..... 15
Description of Selected Solution..... 19
Report of Action Taken..... 20

V RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 24

Results..... 24
Discussion..... 27
Recommendations..... 31
Dissemination..... 31

REFERENCES..... 32

Appendices..... 35

A TEACHER CENTER NEEDS SURVEY..... 35
B LANGUAGE ARTS SURVEY..... 36
C THEME FORM..... 37
D ALTERNATIVE FORM..... 38
E SURVEY..... 39
F BOOKLET - STEPS FOR INTEGRATING..... 40

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1 Survey results of K-2 teachers..... 26

ABSTRACT

Instructing Primary Teachers To Integrate The Curriculum Through An In-Service Program. Wells, Sharon., 1991: Practicum I Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Thematic Approach/ Teaching Strategy/Elementary Education/Planning/Student Motivation/Integrated Curriculum/Developmentally Appropriate

This practicum was designed for primary teachers to demonstrate how to integrate their curriculum using a theme approach. The primary goal was to have primary teachers possess necessary skills to develop an instructional strategy to integrate the curriculum and be more developmentally appropriate.

The writer conducted an in-service training for primary teachers noting the steps used in integrating a curriculum which was presented in a booklet. The steps included (a) Select a topic (b) Brainstorm (c) Gather and prepare materials and resources (d) Plan into daily routine/ schedule (e) Present the unit. A form was developed for the teachers to complete using a theme to integrate the curriculum.

The results of the practicum proved positive. Teachers who participated were knowledgeable in a strategy on developing a theme to integrate the curriculum. The survey given to the teachers at the end of the practicum concluded that the approach was well received. All of the participants remarked that they would use the strategy learned at the in-service training. An unexpected gain was that the teachers were more willing to share their ideas and materials.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The work setting for the writer was in a suburban public school district which included one village and two towns. The population of the community was approximately 16,000 and the school population was 4,719.

Teachers of grades K-6 were housed in five elementary buildings with a total population of 2,699 students. Included in the district was one middle school, grades 7-8, with a population of 673 students. There was one high school, grades 9-12, comprised of 1,347 students. The schools were 95% white students, 2% black, 1% Hispanic and 2% other. The total number of teachers for the above population was 355 and included gifted and talented teachers as well as special education teachers. There were 87 members of the support staff.

Most of the children were bussed on the fleet of 45 busses. Each school shared supporting services of the attendance supervisor, school psychologist, school nurse teacher, remedial reading teachers, and home and school coordinator.

Administration was comprised of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, supervisor of elementary

education, supervisor of secondary education and the principals of the elementary, middle, and high school. The Board of Education was made up of seven volunteer members who were elected for a five year term of office. They meet on the first and third Monday of each month that school is in session. The board is the governing body of the district.

The district was fortunate to have a Teacher Center which offers workshops, seminars, and professional courses and materials. The Teacher Center was in its fifth year of existence. It provided professional development programs and services based on what the staff members determined they needed to increase their effectiveness.

The elementary buildings were spread throughout the village and two towns and were in different socioeconomic areas. Two buildings were in affluent sections of the community, two in areas that were continuing to develop and were comprised of middle class working parents, and one building which was located in an area considered low socioeconomic.

There was much movement of students in and out of the district throughout the year. However, there was very little teacher turnover that took place with the teachers. The mean teaching time was 18 years and many had never taught for another district. This practicum included teachers in grades K-2.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is a classroom teacher of twenty-five years. The training of the writer includes a Masters of Education in Administration and Supervision and also a certificate in special education (Learning Disabilities). The writer was an educational consultant to a preschool in a neighboring community and developed and wrote the curriculum that is currently in place.

In the school district, the writer has held various positions consisting of grade level chairperson, a member of Instructional Policies Council, served on numerous committees which secured new textbooks for the district, collaborated on grants, and presented at workshops at the Teacher Center and other districts. Curriculum development of the Transitional First Program currently in place was co-written by the writer.

The district has established an Early Childhood Committee. The writer is serving on the committee and chairs a task force in charge of helping to establish a program that is developmentally appropriate for K-2 teachers in the district. The guidelines for NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) were being adopted as part of the Early Childhood Program.

The writer is a Transitional First Grade Teacher at present and has worked for the district for 20 years. The writer has also been a first grade, second grade, and third grade teacher as well as an acting principal.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Teachers in K-2 have relied on the State Education Department Syllabus and curriculum guides for each grade level and subject to teach basic skills. Teachers used their curriculum guides developed by the district as a framework to ensure that the state syllabus was being followed. The Basal Reading Program in the district developed basic skills, understanding of materials read, and library instruction. Oral and written expression received attention under the Basal Reading Program. Teachers used the manuals supplied by the reading company for direction. The Arithmetic Program emphasized all basic processes. The scope and sequence charts of the program were utilized as a guide for teachers to follow. The Science Program encouraged direct experience "the doing approach". The Spelling Program, which is linguistic in nature, enabled the student to learn how to spell. The lessons went in specific order and were presented weekly. The Social Studies Program moved from an experience type program in the primary grades into the development of skills, citizenship, use of books and reference materials

in the intermediate grades. Health was taught by a curriculum guide. All textbooks were furnished by the district for each grade level. Instruction was provided with workbooks which accompanied each subject. Art, music, physical education and computer science teachers followed curriculum guidelines. All teachers relied on the teacher manuals for suggested activities. Subjects were taught independent of each other. Children followed a schedule set up by the individual teachers. The subjects and skills were not integrated. There was very little integration of subject matter being taught. The problem was teachers taught subjects independently of each other and had limited knowledge in developing an instructional strategy in how to integrate the curriculum.

Problem Documentation

The existence of the problem was supported by two surveys and a report on the observations of two Educational Consultants from outside the district. One survey was completed for the Teacher Center and one survey was from the Language Arts Task Force. The Language Arts Task Force was part of the Early Childhood Program being developed in the district. The consultants were from a nearby university.

Teachers are given a needs survey each year to determine what they most want to learn more about to insure their effectiveness. The Teacher Center Needs Survey

showed that 207 out of 255 elementary teachers were interested in obtaining more information regarding curriculum development (see Appendix A). Teachers noted on the survey that they were asked to get in more and more subject matter but the time frame for teaching remained the same. The teachers felt there must be a better way to ensure all needs of the children, as well as the state mandates, were being met.

The district was moving in the direction of a more child centered approach instead of an academic approach. The district wanted a program that was more developmentally appropriate. The Early Childhood Committee was formed and they established a Language Arts Task Force. A survey was developed by the committee and given to all K-2 teachers. The survey showed that 23 out of the 46 primary teachers were interested in obtaining information about instructional strategies (see Appendix B).

Two consultants from a university had a chance to observe and speak to teachers in grades K-2. The consultants were in each of the elementary buildings for a half day. A report was returned by the consultants to the district and it was noted that the district had few primary classrooms that were considered developmentally appropriate using the existing instructional strategies. The teachers needed to learn strategies that would make classrooms more in line with the NAEYC guidelines to be more

developmentally appropriate.

Causative Analysis

It is the writer's belief that there were three basic causes for the problem experienced by the teachers. The first cause was that the teacher turnover was very small. The mean teaching experience in the district was 18 years. Many teachers had taught the same way with the same guidelines and the same projects for years. Teachers were not familiar with many of the current practices of education and those aspects of a program that were developmentally appropriate.

The second cause was that teachers have always relied on guides and manuals to teach children. State mandates were to be followed using the guides and manuals presented to the teachers. Teachers taught the subjects independent of each other. They were not given instruction in how to integrate the subjects and be more child centered instead of academic centered.

The third cause was that teachers have little free time to prepare and gather materials when new programs are added to the curriculum. During the school day, the short 30 minutes of preparation time is not sufficient to gather, organize and prepare materials needed to use in the classroom.

The writer felt there was a better way to develop the existing curricula, include children's interests and

prepare materials that were appropriate.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Other professionals have written concerning the problems of teaching subjects independently of each other. Keitz (1987), Nielsen (1989), and Komoski (1990) all discuss the problem of teaching subjects independently of each other.

Keitz (1987) reported that the past curriculum review and development for Anchorage School District had many disadvantages. The disciplines were treated as unrelated units. In doing so, this fragmentation limited synthesizing between the subject areas.

Nielsen (1987) has stated that one goal of education was to have children understand their world. The amount of information to be taught in the schools has steadily increased. Teachers are presenting the information by teaching subjects separately. It is thought that the children will discover relationships between the subjects by themselves.

Komoski (1990) reported that curriculum being taught is fragmented and does not allow for interrelationship of subject matter to occur. The parts are never equal to the whole. Teachers are too dependent on covering the materials in the textbooks.

Other literature gives evidence to the problem of new

subject areas being added along with all the other subject matter. The knowledge base has become larger.

McGarry (1986) stated that curriculum needs to be simplified due to more and more areas added to the curriculum. There are large amounts of knowledge at our disposal for teachers to disperse.

In the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (1989) Interdisciplinary Curriculum Design and Implementation publication, it was noted that new courses add pressure to the school schedule. Courses are added but nothing is taken away. The knowledge base in all subject areas is growing at a fast rate.

Nielsen (1989) reported that educators in order to get in all areas that needed to be taught divided the increased amount of information into separate subjects.

There was literature that discussed a cause that concerned the amount of time teachers are given to gather, prepare, and organize materials.

Brountas (1989) stated that teachers need to strive to be effective in their programs and efficient in their use of time, materials, and energy.

Bracey (1990) stated that universities provide numerous articles for professional journals but few of the articles are read by teachers due to limited time in their schedules.

Literature supported the premise that another cause

of the problem was teachers rely mainly on manuals and textbooks for the instruction in the classroom.

Komoski (1990) explained that most teachers are dependent on covering the material in the textbooks which are ordered for them to use in the classroom.

O'Neil (1990) stated that educators are given mandates and regulations to follow. Teachers use of textbooks and lectures are in the majority of the classrooms today.

Lovitt (1990) reported that teachers have always looked to other sources (guides) when deciding what should be taught and how it should be taught.

Another cause revealed by the literature was the isolation of teachers. This contributed to the problem.

Lieberman and Miller (1984) addressed the fact that teachers are isolated in their classrooms and seldom get suggestions from other professionals. Once a teacher has graduated, they are alone in the classroom with little help from other teachers.

Goodlad (1990) stated that teachers are isolated socially as well as professionally. This isolation begins in teacher education. The isolation makes it difficult for teachers to later develop closeness to peers in a school setting.

Teaching subjects separate from each other does not allow for relationships between the subjects to take

place. Children are expected to discover how subjects come together by themselves. As more courses are added and others are not deleted, the burden of discovering relationships is placed upon the child. Teachers need to learn a strategy to bring the subjects, knowledge and children closer together.

In reviewing the literature, the areas of interdisciplinary curriculum were utilized. The integrated curriculum in the areas of math, language arts, science, social studies, and health were also viewed by the writer in studying the problem of teaching subjects independently of each other.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was to have primary teachers possess necessary skills to develop an instructional strategy to integrate the curriculum and in doing so be more developmentally appropriate. There were two specific objectives the writer hoped to accomplish. First, after having in-service training, the teachers in K-2 would be able to develop and plan a theme using the theme form presented during the in-service training (see Appendix C). Second, after having in-service training, teachers would be able to implement a completed theme into the curriculum as observed by the Early Childhood Specialist with a checklist through observation of lesson plans, projects, songs, and bulletin board displays.

At the end of the three month implementation period, the writer expected teachers to have an instructional strategy that would allow them to plan and integrate the curriculum and through implementation of the theme be more developmentally appropriate in the classroom. Success would be measured by the theme form completed by the teachers in in-service training and by the observations of

a checklist by the Early Childhood Specialist which would include observations of lesson plans, projects, songs, and bulletin boards in the classroom of those K-2 teachers having in-service training.

Performance Objectives

The following objectives were projected for this practicum:

Objective 1: During the three month implementation, K-2 teachers, after having in-service training, will be able to develop and plan a theme using the theme form presented by the writer.

Objective 2: During the three month implementation, K-2 teachers, after having in-service training, will be able to implement a completed theme into the curriculum by a checklist as observed by the Early Childhood Specialist through the observation of lesson plans, displays, projects, songs and bulletin board displays.

Measurement of Objectives

Objective one will be measured by a form presented at the in-service training. The form has an area to define the theme, place an introductory activity, culminating activity, subject areas, projects, songs, finger plays, materials, and anything of importance for the person filling out the form. Another form will also be presented to meet the styles of those teachers who want an alternate

form (see Appendix B). The form can be added onto at any time and kept for future references. In having the form completed, it allows for timesaving measures if there is to be the use of the same theme in ensuring years. The completed form can be shared with others and it will be time efficient for the person using the same theme. Mastery is defined as completing the form.

Objective two is measured by a checklist developed by the writer for the Early Childhood Specialist to complete in observing lesson plans, displays, projects, songs, and bulletin boards. Mastery will be measured by the theme being implemented in the classroom. If the Early Childhood Specialist is not available, a survey will be given to the teachers to complete and return to the writer (see Appendix E).

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Some primary teachers teach subjects independent of each other and they need to develop a strategy of integrating their existing curriculum. Some possible solutions are offered which others have suggested.

McGarry (1986) proposed integrating the entire kindergarten of Fairfax County, Virginia curriculum while incorporating children's learning in the entire instructional program. A set of integrated units were developed by the teachers. These units could be used at any time, in any way, or even not at all. The decision was left to the teacher to use depending on style, class, and interests of the teacher. Three strands were utilized in integrating the curriculum. They were motor development/music, math/science, and language arts.

While Fairfax County chose one grade level curriculum to integrate, others offer the solution to integrate the entire curriculum.

Keitz (1987) suggested that education needs to address the issue of preparing the future lives of students. There is a need to look at the K-12 curriculum

to have more critical thinking skills, human relations skills, personal skills, and societal skills. The integrated curriculum is based on common threads from one discipline and program to another. There is not a need to be solely concerned with what concepts are taught at what level but that those concepts will make learning a life long process.

Nielsen (1989) suggested that teachers use an integrative interdisciplinary curriculum. This type of curriculum will provide students with an overall view of learning. The first step would be to select a method, such as a global theme, and then relate subtopics to accompany the activities. The common threads of each discipline would then be developed.

Brountas (1989) favored using a thematic approach for teachers to be more effective and efficient. A theme approach allows for flexibility to develop areas, topics, and units which integrate many disciplines. She further added that the thematic approach extends the concept of wholeness and naturalness in the curriculum.

Wingert and Kantrowitz (1989) proposed that schools reflect the children's needs and individual interests. This type of teaching needs a lot of planning to make the classroom function. The planning becomes the responsibility of the individual teacher and takes skill. Teachers need to be trained in order for this type of

teaching to take place.

NAEYC issued a position statement on developmentally appropriate practices for young children. These practices were based on research of how young children learn. NAEYC is a professional association of early childhood educators who believe that children learn by participating and that the materials presented to children should have meaning for them.

Krogh (1990) stated that there are as many ways of teaching as there are teachers. What is needed is an integrated curriculum that would make use of children's interests. However, integrating the curriculum doesn't always come naturally. Every teacher needs to seek methods which will help children to understand order and enable them to make sense of what is being taught.

Katz (1988) suggested that children need to interact with adults, other children, materials, and their own environment. This type of interaction serves to help children make sense of the world. Children are not born liking or disliking school and they should come to find school a rewarding place to grow to their fullest potentials. A variety of teaching methods is needed to ensure that learning and development are fostered. One method suggested is through the use of projects. A project would encompass children working on topic or theme which is in-depth in nature. This approach integrates the curriculum and also makes teaching and learning more

interesting and meaningful for the student.

Gamberg, Kwak, Hutchings, Altheim, and Edwards (1988) focused their ideas on theme study as a means of learning for children. Themes combine a way to bring a child-centered and academic-centered curriculum more into focus. Instruction combines a psycholinguistic approach in reading, process approach in writing, problem solving approach in math with manipulatives, and a discovery approach in science and social studies. The authors suggested that teachers keep an on-going file for themes. In doing so, continuance of a theme becomes less time consuming and more effective for the teacher.

In the use of Explorations, Lalie (1988) stated that themes are a vehicle for presenting, initiating, and introducing concepts and skills. These themes provide a way to integrate various subject areas with these concepts and skills. Most often, themes have a focus on social studies or language arts. There is a need to balance informal, real life learning with the attainment of necessary skills.

Willert and Kamii (1985) stated that the issue is not necessarily which methods will be effective in attaining the best test scores or which methods will enhance the child's desire to learn. Children who are intrinsically motivated gain more than those who wait to be told by the teacher.

Short (1987) suggested revising teacher education as a means of solving the problem. This includes everything that comes under the heading of curriculum (i.e., organization, goals, standards, etc.). This preliminary step could provide students with a different approach before they become certified teachers.

Goodlad (1990) stated that teacher education programs need to provide prospective teachers with tactics on dealing with the entire school rather than just the class they are responsible for. This change would bring about better educators.

Description of Selected Solution

The writer felt that there was a need for teachers to be more aware of children's interests. Individual subject areas would be integrated using a theme approach. In order for primary teachers to develop a strategy for integration, they needed in-service training in developing a theme unit. Along with the knowledge of how to develop a unit, teachers would have a list of professional books to use as a reference for integrating the curriculum. This listing would also benefit teachers by being more time efficient. The writer would be the resource person available to primary teachers not only to solve problems, but also to encourage the sharing of ideas, materials, and themes with other teachers.

Teachers in K-2, when surveyed, recognized the need

to learn different instructional strategies. The writer felt that the in-service training would be successful since teachers themselves saw a need. The teachers would be more organized and have skills necessary to develop themes on their own. This strategy would lend itself to become more time efficient for teachers thereby allowing more time to be spent on children's interests. This type of teaching would make the classrooms more developmentally appropriate in nature.

Report of Action Taken

The implementation of this practicum began September 10, 1990 after receiving approval. The Assistant Superintendent of Instruction was notified of the intentions of the writer and permission was granted to implement an in-service training for interested K-2 teachers on integrating the curriculum.

During the following weeks, materials were gathered by the writer which included manuals of the existing curriculum, teacher resource books, library books and ideas and activities to incorporate in the workshop. A booklet describing the steps in organizing and integrating the curriculum was co-developed to present to the teachers (see Appendix F). A current listing of materials that can be ordered from the Teacher Center in the district was obtained. This listing included books for ideas, fingerplays, dittos, songs, activities and centers.

Eighteen teachers participated in the in-service training in October 1990. Each teacher received a booklet describing the steps in organizing and integrating the curriculum. Teachers were reminded that they should be familiar with the current and existing curriculum. They need to draw upon their expertise and experiences in guiding them to combine both the content and the skills of the subjects that they teach to integrate the curriculum.

The first step to follow was the selection of a topic theme, or project that was either decided upon by the teacher or the interests of the children in the classroom.

The second step included brainstorming of ideas that would relate to the theme, topic, or project. Teachers should rely on other teachers, utilize professional materials, and ask the librarian for assistance. One aspect was to adapt old favorites that teachers use over and over. If a teacher liked a particular song or poem or game, that song or poem or game could be changed and new words added for each theme, topic, or project.

The third step was to gather and prepare the materials and resources. Placing all items in a box or carton would help in keeping materials together. New materials could then be added at any time to keep the theme current. Teachers should utilize the librarian, computer programs, special teachers (Art, Music, Gifted, Physical Education) to gather ideas for projects, centers, trips,

activities, and related topics.

The fourth step was to place the information gathered in step three on a workable form. The forms were shown to provide for individual patterns of organization for the teachers.

The last step was to present the theme always noting new thoughts or ideas or skills on the forms the theme progressed.

The writer then went through the steps using a theme already completed and used by the writer in the classroom. Teachers were shown how skills and concepts were chosen from the separated subjects and combined for a smoother flow of ideas and skill development for the children.

The teachers broke into groups and worked on a theme of their choice. As the writer circulated, help was given in locating information, planning activities, suggesting alternative stories, and filling out the form of their choice. Along with the help, the teachers were given a listing of the Teacher Center materials for their use in finding activities. Something that was not planned was the teachers mentioned their own professional books that also contained ideas. They exchanged the names of the references and shared the ideas and activities.

The writer served as a resource person for the remainder of the practicum. Information was sent to those teachers who requested extra ideas. This help included

information on topics such as Nursery Rhymes, Scarecrows, Grinch Who Stole Christmas, Frogs and Toads, Hanukkah, Halloween, Christmas Around the World, and Dinosaurs. Other teachers requested information on songs, fingerplays, and patterns. The writer sent professional articles and booklets to the buildings as an aid in showing how others organized themes and integrated their curriculum.

At the completion of the practicum, a survey was distributed and completed by the teachers which served as a report and final evaluation for the practicum. This was done in lieu of the Early Childhood Specialist as previously planned.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem that existed in the writer's work setting was that teachers taught subjects independent of each other and had limited knowledge in developing an instructional strategy in how to integrate the curriculum. The teachers adhered to the state mandates and curriculum guides for each subject taught.

Therefore, the problem was that the teachers had limited knowledge of an instructional strategy in how to integrate the curriculum. The solution to the problem was to establish an in-service training to instruct the teachers on how to integrate the curriculum. The participants would be shown a set of steps in guiding them to integrate in existing curriculum. The steps were placed into a booklet and given to the teachers.

The goal of the practicum was to have primary teachers possess the necessary skills to develop an instructional strategy to integrate the curriculum and, in doing so, would be more developmentally appropriate.

There were two specific objectives that were designed to achieve this goal. Each objective will be noted and

discussed.

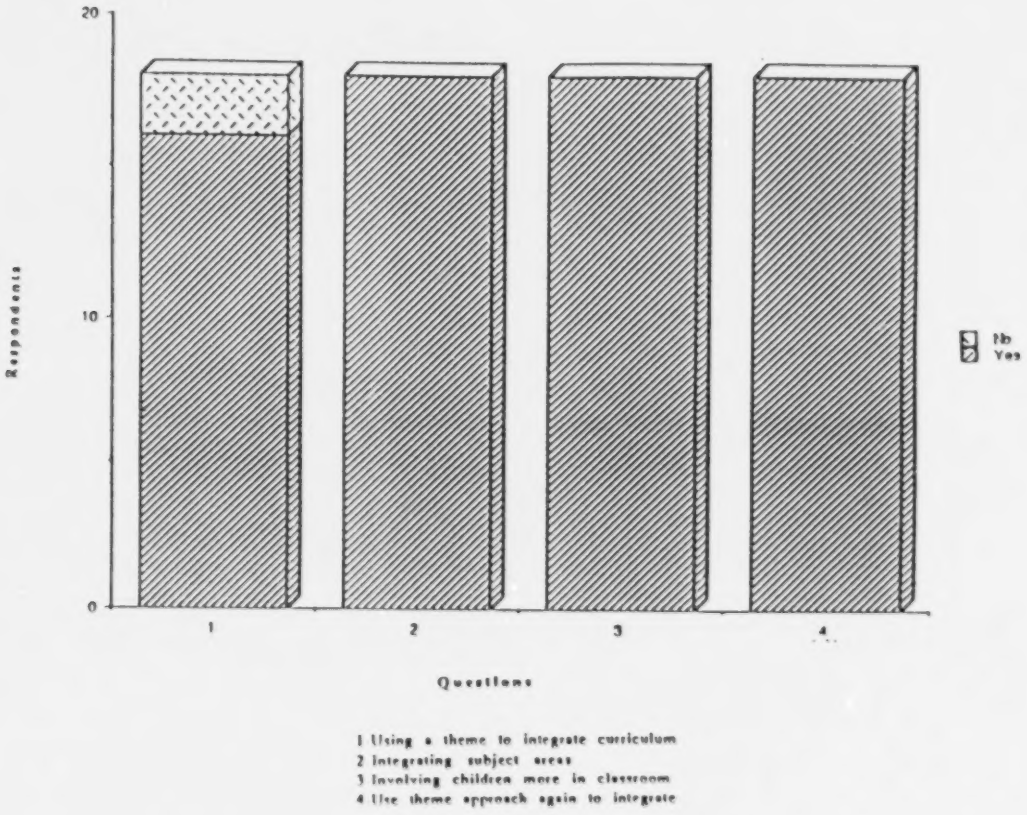
Objective 1: During the three month implementation, K-2 teachers, after having in-service training, would be able to develop and plan a theme using the theme form presented by the writer at the time of training (see Appendix C).

The K-2 teachers demonstrated mastery of the objective by developing and planning of a theme that was chosen by each participant using the form presented at the training. This was observed by the writer as individual help was given to each of the participants during the in-service training.

Objective 2: During the three month implementation, K-2 teachers after having in-service training would be able to implement a completed theme into the curriculum by a checklist as observed by the Early Childhood Specialist through the observation of lesson plans, displays, projects, songs, and bulletin boards. (This was changed to the teachers completing a survey and returning the results to the writer (see Appendix F)).

Results for objective 2 from the completed survey indicated mastery by those teachers that used the approach of themes to integrate the curriculum. The results for this objective are summarized in Figure I.

Figure 1. Survey results of K-2 teachers



Question 1 asked if the teacher was currently using a theme to integrate the curriculum. It is to be noted that both teachers who responded negatively were new to the district and were not familiar with the content of each subject area. They were using special days such as ice cream day or apple day instead of a theme. The other 16 teachers had taught in the district for over 15 years and were more familiar with the curriculum. Some of the themes

that were used by the teachers included apples, scarecrows nursery rhymes, trains, shoes, gingerbread boy, pumpkins, and Indians.

Question 2 of the survey dealt with which subject areas were integrated. The subject listed as integrated the most was language arts. Some teachers integrated social studies or science or math with language arts. In other instances, teachers responded to integrating all subject areas into the theme being developed.

Question 3 dealt with involving children more in the classroom. The teachers noted that children were making choices about what to do in the classroom, working in groups, cooperatively learning, using more hands on activities and projects, and teachers noticed improved attitudes of the children.

Question 4 asked if the participants would utilize the theme approach for integration again. The topics that they would use included dinosaurs, bears, food, space, dogs, mice, mittens, sandwiches, frogs, toads, hats, seashells, houses, and farms. The listing of the above themes will be sent to the participants so that they may contact one another if they would like to attempt the same theme or if they have something to contribute to the theme.

Discussion

A review and interpretation of the data indicates that the objectives were achieved in having teachers plan,

develop, and implement themes into the curriculum in order to integrate the curriculum. Based on the results of the survey, both objectives were achieved. Others have had success in using themes for integrating the curriculum.

Roseane Kessens (1984) suggested organizing the curriculum around a theme. The theme increased the ability to integrate isolated subject areas into learning experiences. Themes provided flexibility for teaching and evaluation of children. She suggested the use of webbing as a way to integrate all subject areas. She further stated that themes help integrate, stimulate, allow for differences, lead to knowledge of the curriculum, and that themes lend themselves to teaching subject areas together.

The Georgia State Department of Education (1982) produced a handbook for its' teachers. They stated that educators such as Fredrich Froebel, Maria Montessori and John Dewey also used the integrated approach with success. The approach of integration is interdisciplinary and is viewed to be more effective as a means of educating children.

Dorothy Zjawin (1980) used Mother Goose as means of spicing up her curriculum. She used the rhymes and her creative ideas to incorporate Mother Goose in all areas of her curriculum.

Jan Donaldson (1984) described a 10 step process for bookwebbing which used a storybook for instruction in the

curriculum areas. Her storybook theme met with great results with teachers.

Jane Baskwill and Paulette Whitman (1986) developed a sourcebook for teachers in which themes were chosen and developed for the teacher. The authors listed reasons for using a theme and the steps to follow to organize a theme. The book is a wonderful reference for teachers to refer when using a theme approach.

Herbert Kohl (1984) used themes to tie activities together. He felt thematic teaching provided an opportunity to make the content interesting for children.

Jane Baskwill (1988) stated that themestorming can bring out the many possibilities of themes. The theme helps in organizing materials to make the connection between what children know and what they will be involved in. A good theme is rich in literature and links the curriculum together making the results of planning a theme worth the effort.

The New York City Board of Education (1984) developed a guide for teachers separated into grade levels K-2. The guides stress the importance of an environment that fits the child and includes themes already completed which can be used to integrate the curriculum in areas of social, math, art, and physical education. The themes offer a variety of activities which included individual differences for meeting the needs of the children. The thematic

approach allows the teacher to organize learning experiences and provide appropriate activities to the theme being studied.

Suzanne Krogh (1990) noted that an integrated curriculum incorporates a number of components and without each subject area in the curriculum, there would be a lack of strength.

There were certain unanticipated outcomes which proved to enhance the existing practicum. The writer demonstrated how a theme was to be developed and the teachers wanted to use all the activities that were demonstrated. It was suggested that the developed theme be made into a kit and shared with other teachers. The inclusion of developing kits on a specific theme to be shared by teachers was not anticipated. The kit could be stored at the Teacher Center and be made available for any teacher who wanted to utilize the kit. It was suggested that other kits could be developed. The second outcome was the extended sharing of ideas since teachers often find themselves isolated in their classrooms. In the writer's own building, there was noticeable sharing of ideas and more enthusiasm when developing and implementing themes. The next unanticipated outcome was that the librarians were asked to locate more materials, books, and supplies for the teachers. The librarians were rarely used previously and they were excited that the teachers were more involved.

Based on the results, the writer concluded that teachers who are given instruction on how to integrate the curriculum will have a useful strategy that will enable them to carry out this practice. The instruction helped in forming a foundation for the teachers to share ideas and materials with each other.

Recommendations

The following recommendation should be noted:

1. Training should include third grade teachers.
2. New kits should be developed for teacher use.
3. New teachers should be given the in-service training.

Dissemination

The writer plans to share the practicum at an Early Childhood program in a neighboring district. The practicum will also be presented at a reading convention. The writer will also present the in-service training at the Training Center for new and interested teachers.

References

Baskwill, J. (1988). Themestorming. Teaching K-8, Vol. 19 (1), 80-82.

Baskwill, J. and Whitman, P. (1986). Whole language sourcebook. Scholastic Publications: Ontario Canada.

Bracey, G. W. (1990). Rethinking school and university roles. Educational Leadership, 47 (8), 65-66.

Brountas, M. (1989). Using the thematic approach. Teaching K-8, 20, 53-55.

Donaldson, J. (1984). Bookwebbing across the curriculum. Reading Teacher, Vol. 37 (4), 435-437.

Gamberg, R., Kwak, W., Hutchings, M., Altheim, J. and Edwards, G. (1988). Learning and loving it: theme studies in the classroom. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.

Georgia State Department of Education. (1982). Personalizing education for children: a handbook for early childhood education K-4. Atlanta Office of Instructional Services: Atlanta, Georgia. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 220 209.)

Goodlad, J. I. (1990). Studying the education of educators from conception to findings. Phi Delta Kappa, 71 (9), 698-701.

Jacobs, H. H. (1987). Interdisciplinary curriculum design and implementation: A.S.C.D.: Virginia.

Katz, L. G. (1988). Early childhood education: what research tells us. Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Keitz, R. (1987). Integrating curriculum for tomorrow's students. Educational Leadership, 44 (4), 68-70.

Kessens, R. (1984). Themes. University North Dakota Press: Grand Forks. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 235 994.)

Kohl, H. (1984). Growing minds on becoming a teacher. Harper & Row Publishers: NY.

Komoski, P. K. (1990). Needed: a whole curriculum approach. Educational Leadership, 47 (5), 72-78.

Krogh, S. (1990). The integrated early childhood curriculum. McGraw Hill.

Lalie, H. (1988). Explorations. Ontario: Addison Wesley.

Lieberman, A. and Miller, L. (1984). Teachers, their world and their work. A.S.C.D.: Virginia.

Lovitt, Z. (1990). Rethinking my roots as a teacher. Educational Leadership, 47 (6), 43-46.

McGarry, T. P. (1986). Integrating learning for young children. Educational Leadership, 44, 64-66.

New York City Board of Education. (1984). "Now we are six"- a guide to teaching first grade. Division of Curriculum and Instruction. Brooklyn: NY. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 277 484.)

Nielsen, M. E. (1989). Integrative learning for young children: a thematic approach. Educational Horizons, 68, 18-24.

O'Neil, J. (1990). Piecing together the reconstructuring Puzzle. Educational Leadership, 47 (7), 4-10.

Short, E. C. (1987). Curriculum decision making in teacher education: policies, program development, and design. Journal of Teacher Education (July/August), 2-10.

Willert, M. and Kamii, C. (May 1985). Reading in kindergarten. Young Children, 3-8.

Wingert, P. and Kantrowitz. (April, 1989). How kids learn. Newsweek, 50-57.

Zjawin, D. (1980). Mother goose was my paraprofessional. Instructor, Vol. 90 (4), 60-62.

APPENDIX A
TEACHER CENTER SURVEY

1990 Needs Assessment

One major distinguishing feature of our Center is that the ideas for all of our activities and sponsored programs are generated and planned by teachers. These ideas come from individuals, groups, representatives to the Teacher Center's Policy Board and formal needs assessment surveys like you are about to complete. Please take some time to respond to this survey. Future programs initiated by the [redacted] Teacher Center will be developed from the results. Thank you for your continued support.

A. School Information:

1. Teaching Status

_____Elementary Teacher _____Bldg. _____Grade

_____Secondary Teacher _____Bldg. _____Grade _____Depart.

_____Other (please specify): _____

B. Center Summary:

1. What ideas, concepts, or techniques from Center courses have led you to enhance your professional expertise?

2. How do you believe the existence of the Teacher Center has changed <u>you</u> with respect to your effectiveness as a teacher and your satisfaction with your profession?

C. Future Directions:

1. What new directions, new opportunities, or new areas should the Teacher Center Policy Board explore during the coming year?

1989 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To what extent are you interested in each of the following topics? For each item place an "X" over one of the following numbers:

4 = Greatly interested (GRT)
3 = Moderately interested (MOD)
2 = Somewhat interested (SOM)
1 = Slightly or not interested (SLI)

#1	**Personal/Professional Growth**	GRT/MOD/SOM/SLI
	>Cooperative Learning	4 3 2 1
	>Stress Management	4 3 2 1
	>Effective Teaching Methods	4 3 2 1
	>Classroom Management Techniques	4 3 2 1
	>Whole Language Approaches	4 3 2 1
	>Developmentally Appropriate Practices	4 3 2 1
	>Needs of New Teachers	4 3 2 1
	>Research Updates in Any Field	4 3 2 1
	>Learning Styles	4 3 2 1
#2	**Technology**	GRT/MOD/SOM/SLI
	>Computer Applications for Subject Areas	4 3 2 1
	>Software Reviews	4 3 2 1
	>Professional Utility Applications:	
	Database Use	4 3 2 1
	Word Processing	4 3 2 1
	Desktop Publishing	4 3 2 1
	Report Card Systems	4 3 2 1
	>New Technologies (laser disks, CD Rom, etc.)	4 3 2 1
#3	**School Climate**	GRT/MOD/SOM/SLI
	>Effective Schools Research	4 3 2 1
	>Classroom Management	4 3 2 1
	>Essential Elements of Instruction	4 3 2 1
	>Discipline Techniques	4 3 2 1
	>Enhancement of Self-Esteem	
	>Consultant Teacher Models	4 3 2 1
	>Peer Coaching Techniques	4 3 2 1
	>Dealing with Children at Risk	4 3 2 1
	>School Wide Enrichment	4 3 2 1
#4	**Curriculum Development**	GRT/MOD/SOM/SLI
	>Information/Activities For Any Subject Area	4 3 2 1
	>Resources (e.g. people, materials, etc.)	4 3 2 1
	>Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	4 3 2 1
	>Writing (e.g. what to/how to; practices, methods	4 3 2 1
	>Enrichment in the Classroom	4 3 2 1
	>Special Education	4 3 2 1
	>Self-Esteem	4 3 2 1
#5	**Communication**	GRT/MOD/SOM/SLI
	>Feedback On Any Role As A Classroom Teacher	4 3 2 1
	>Community Agencies/Services/Resources	4 3 2 1
	>Teacher Rewards/Recognition/Professionalism	4 3 2 1
	>Networking/Meetings With Teachers In Any Subject Area	4 3 2 1
	>Teacher Visitation/Exchange Programs	4 3 2 1

APPENDIX B

April 1989

LANGUAGE ARTS TASK FORCE INTEREST SURVEY

Please circle the number that best indicates your interest in each Language Arts strand. Zero indicates no interest while five indicates very interested.

Choral Reading	0	1	2	3	4	5
Shared Reading.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Guided Reading.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Predictable Books.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Paired Reading.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Children's Literature.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Independent Reading.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Language Experience Charts.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sharing Time.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Storytelling.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Expressive Arts.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Everyday Print.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Emergent Writing.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Process Writing.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Journal Writing.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
Instructional Strategies.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
_____.....	0	1	2	3	4	5

The Language Arts Task Force would like to prioritize the above strands. Please take a moment to prioritize your interests as best as possible.

First choice _____

Second choice _____

Third choice _____

Please circle that which applies:

kindergarten teacher first-grade teacher second-grade teacher

transitional-first teacher _____grade teacher

resource room teacher reading teacher administrator

LWW TJW GWJ GHN CFJ AGM

If you have any additional elements which may be helpful in developing each strand or disseminating information, please jot them down on the back.

If you are interested in joining the Language Arts Task Force, please contact Jackie Visser. We welcome new members at any time.

APPENDIX C

THEME FORM

THEME _____

BOOKS

Fiction
Non-fiction
Picture Books
Magazines
Newspaper articles

A.V.

Video tapes
Sound filmstrips
Cassettes
Films
Pictures
Records
Educational T.V.

READING	WRITING
Big books Multiple copies of books Experience charts Vocabulary/word development	Shape/Creative Books Journals Story dictation Computer Writing Center
MATH	**SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES**
Manipulatives Computers	Experiments Activities Role Playing Projects

INTRODUCTION:

CULMINATING ACTIVITY:

Other ideas to incorporate:
- physical motor activities
- art projects
- talents unlimited
- bulletin boards
- group games
- special teachers
- expressive arts (poems, fingerplays, songs, puppets, drama)
- resource people
- cooking activities
- field trips

INTEREST AREAS/CENTERS

READING:
- flannelboard
- word/picture cards
- books
- games

MATH:
- manipulatives
- magnetic board
- clock
- games
- computer
- play money

WRITING:
- shape books
- magazines, pictures
- variety of writing tools

LISTENING:
- tapes & books

ART CENTER:
- clay
- variety of papers
- paints
- egg cartons, etc.
- (include independent & patterned activities)

DRAMA AREA:
- clothes, costumes
- puppets

QUIET AREA:
- puzzles
- tracing materials

THEME _____

BOOKS

A.V.

READING	WRITING

MATH	SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES

APPENDIX D

ALTERNATIVE FORM

Theme:

AUTHOR: _____

TITLE:		
VOCABULARY:		
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:		
ACTIVITIES:		

APPENDIX E

SURVEY

SURVEY:Integrating the Curriculum Name: (Optional)----------

	Yes	No
1. I am using a theme/project in my classroom to integrate the curriculum?		
If yes: Name of the theme/project.		
_____		
2. I am integrating some subject areas.		
If yes: Name subject areas integrated.		
_____		
_____		
3. I am involving children more in the classroom.		
If yes: Comment on how children are involved,		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
4. I will use the theme approach to integrate the curriculum again.		
If yes: List themes/projects you might use.		
_____		
_____		
_____		

APPENDIX F

BOOKLET - STEPS FOR INTEGRATING

INTEGRATING THE CURRICULUM: A THEME APPROACH

"Blend activities with children's interests. Toss in a generous portion of creativity and motivation. Spread across the curriculum. Serves K-2 teachers interested in integrating their programs."

Presented by:

Sharon Wells
G.W.Johnson School

Norma Doolittle
T.J.Watson School

Part 1: Organizing a thematic unit.

Part 2; A sample thematic unit.

RATIONALE: THEMATIC UNITS

1. Provides the opportunity to gather and utilize a wide range of materials.
2. More opportunities for students to experience, explore, and discover.
3. Highly motivating.
4. Enables teacher to integrate the curriculum in a meaningful way.
5. Provides many opportunities to share language.
6. Individual interests can be accommodated by directing a student to focus upon his/her interests.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN....KNOW YOUR FRAMEWORK

Thematic units can be utilized:

a.) part of the day (ex. last hour of day)
b.) to correlate one or more specific subjects
c.) all day to correlate everything

******Thematic units are flexible to meet the needs of a variety of teaching styles.

Thematic units can last a day, a week, two weeks, a month, or up to a year.

STEP-BY-STEP

"Organizing a unit"

1. Select a topic.

2. Brainstorm

* your own ideas
* with other teachers
* utilize professional idea books/magazines
* librarian
* gifted teacher
* adapt "favorites"

3. Gather and/or prepare materials & resources.

* librarian
* CMC/BOCES catalog
* parents
* computer resources
* contact special teachers
* field trip arrangements
* newsletters/notices
* bulletin boards
* art projects
* centers

4. Plan into daily routine/schedule.

5. Present the unit.